

film news



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DOCUMENTARY *film news*

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QUOTA

THE LAST few rugged miles to the promised land are traditionally the hardest on the feet and documentary film-makers do not always appreciate how close they may be to the end of a long journey. For adequate theatrical distribution is nearer than at any time since John Grierson brought his herrings home nearly twenty years ago.

The cynic will here break in with hard and pessimistic words. He will argue with some justice that it remains as Herculean a labour as ever it was to persuade the exhibitor of the virtues of the film of fact; that the national home of the Philistines is still in Wardour Street; that there are plenty of good supporting films still unbooked. The incontrovertible fact remains that the exhibitor, however unregenerate, is now required by law to find 25 per cent of his supporting programme in the British market. The law that says so has been in force since October 1. Moreover, the reliefs from its full impact that are to be granted to a very high proportion of exhibitors because of their special competitive circumstances, will apply only in the case of the first feature film, and will provide no escape from the obligation to fulfil the full quota in second features and shorts.

There is, of course, a snag. Those who will not be comforted are right when they point out that the conditions for the marketing of short films and second features could scarcely be worse than they are at present. A quota may have been fixed but there remains no guarantee of revenue commensurate with the cost of first-class supporting films. Distributors and exhibitors are only too ready to admit that their financial arrangements do not at present provide for the paying of adequate rentals for anything but the feature film. The burden of their argument is that the feature producers demand the last penny that can be wrung from the public, leaving nothing for the makers of supporting films.

The problem is not new. It has always been clear that hand in hand with the fixing of an adequate quota there must come some reform in the processes for marketing supporting films. The need for new methods has been recognized in many influential quarters and, in particular, within the Board of Trade. Mr Harold Wilson has promised to set up a Committee to investigate and report upon film-marketing and it can confidently be expected that the case of the supporting-programme makers will receive sympathetic attention. But how soon?

It is of the most vital importance that the Board of Trade should realize the urgency of this inquiry into marketing and distribution, and should be aware that in the interim its quota legislation could become undermined. Some solution to the immediate problem may perhaps be found in an increase in the supply from Governmental, commercial or other national organizations of sponsored films suitable for theatrical showing. (Presumably we are now past the point where it will be argued that sponsorship automatically excludes entertainment.) The new Quota Act does indeed provide an opportunity for sponsors who wish to see the cultural and entertainment level of the supporting programme raised, since the chances of theatrical distribution for their films are considerably greater than they have ever been before. The fact remains that the number of sponsors who will take a sufficiently enlightened view of their responsibilities to the community is always likely to be limited. There is no escaping a final conclusion that it is the President of the Board of Trade who, having brought us thus far, must conduct the makers of supporting films those last few painful miles to their proper place in the public service.

International Scientific Film Congress

London 1948

by

JOHN MADDISON

THE Scientific Film Association of Great Britain was born in 1943, out of the enthusiasms of the scientific film society movement and the pioneer efforts of a group within the scientists' trade union, the AScW. The whole edifice of its achievement since then, in organizing and disseminating information about films and in stimulating a nation-wide interest in the screen as a weapon of science, has been built on the voluntary labours of its members. In 1947, side by side with its French colleagues of the Institut de Cinematographie Scientifique, it carried this achievement further by jointly calling together a Congress in Paris which established the International Scientific Film Association. Delegates from every corner of the earth were unanimous in wishing to honour Britain by holding the Association's 1948 Congress in London. In accepting this invitation, the SFA delegates were conscious that to organize such an event would impose a heavy load upon a body whose only finances were its members' subscriptions. The British Government recognized the value a series of international meetings of this kind would have both for science and cinematography in this country. Through the British Film Institute, it made available to the Scientific Film Association, a grant of money substantial enough to guarantee the decent and efficient management of the occasion.

Nine crowded days of activity at the beginning of October with discussions, film shows, exhibitions and international *rencontres*, were the outcome of some months of anxious preparation. In these lines, I can only offer *DFN* readers a stop-press canter through what has been up to now the most important series ever held of international manifestations for cinema in the service of science.

The Congress began with an event of historic significance in another medium—television. After the opening reception, at which Mr Patrick Gordon Walker had underlined the Government's close interest in the scientific film, the delegates were taken to Alexandra Palace, to see a televised preview of some of the films to be shown later in the week. To my mind, the scene before the television cameras symbolized the routes along which we are hoping to advance. John Grierson, to whom we owe so vast an enlargement of the social dimension of cinema, introduced Jean Painlevé, the poet of science on the screen, and Otto Storch, who in his laboratory in Vienna has demonstrated that film is an indispensable instrument of fundamental research. But the outstanding event of the evening came at the end. A hundred thousand or so viewers were able to see Painlevé linking the television camera directly to the microscope and so, for the first time ever, allowing them to gaze with him, through the

screens of their sets, on the spectacle of change and movement as it was actually taking place beneath the microscope lens. Painlevé has made one of his most characteristic films about *Daphnia*, the water flea; here we were exploring its tiny anatomy, not through film, but with all the freshness and immediacy of television. Exciting perspectives are opened up by all this—a whole nation may one day together look down into a world beyond the range of normal human vision.

In the four days of sometimes dry discussion which followed, constructive endeavour was the keynote; in Ritchie Calder's happy phrase, the Iron Curtain gave place to the Silver Screen. A main issue was the more effective international distribution of films; it was realized that a first step towards this must be a better organized system for the exchange of information about films. To this end, the members of a sub-commission, and notably Painlevé, Loose of Holland and Stanford of Britain, worked hard to complete the labours of preceding months and even years in establishing a standard card for recording essential data about individual films. The draft of such a card was approved by the Assembly and will be circulated to all countries. From such beginnings, it is hoped that a reliable international catalogue of scientific films will eventually be evolved. In the meantime, a sub-commission of ISFA will continue to work on cataloguing and appraisal and a further sub-commission will consider, on a brief largely prepared by one of the Australian delegates, other problems of the exchange of films between nations. Besides encouraging the wider distribution of films, the International Association is also pledged to stimulating the production of new scientific films. Science and Cinematography should transcend frontiers, but it was clear from the discussion that internationally there is still much duplication of effort in the production of films, and mutual ignorance of production plans. Apart from the exchange of information about such matters, it was felt that efforts should be made to set on foot international projects—each of which might be co-ordinated by a single country. For example, Poland was interested in a project on bird migration, Canada might be asked to undertake the co-ordination of a similar one of animal parasites on plants and Britain might envisage working on oceanography and meteorology. The Assembly set up a commission with representatives from Britain, France, Denmark, Poland, Canada and Mexico, to consider how these ideas might be implemented; Arthur Elton, the British member, was entrusted with the task of drawing up a preliminary document to give these general ideas on production a practical shape.

A three-day festival of scientific films at the Royal Empire Society gave delegates and some two thousand members of the public the opportunity of seeing some fifty films from close on a score of countries. From Britain, there were among others the solid expositional virtues of *Precise Measurements for Engineers* (Data—COI for DSIR), a superb high-speed record of Fuel Atomization (SIMPL for Shell Film Unit) and GB's splendid *Atomic Physics*. From France, with a host of other good things, came a series of remarkable biological research films, wittily commented on by the maker, Dragesco. Poland contributed a beautifully photographed and altogether enchanting film on the incubation of young birds. One of Canada's films was the acutely observed psychological piece *Feeling of Hostility*. The New Zealand Government Film Unit took us on a research expedition to a remote volcanic island, and Australia's study of the diet of a primitive Pacific community brought an exotic flavour to one show. At another show, spontaneous applause interrupted the screening of *World of Crystals*, one of two colour films from the Soviet Union. And these are only a handful of purely personal impressions out of an embarrassment of riches from the countries named and a dozen others.

Of particular value were the occasions during the congress when specialists met to discuss common problems. At three medical sessions, films were shown, special techniques of research by the cine-camera demonstrated, and ideas exchanged on the best ways of conveying information about medical films. At the educational meetings, speakers from England and Wales, Scotland, Denmark, Egypt, Belgium, Germany and Australia, were mainly concerned with the organization of school film services, and many interesting contrasts of method and approach were brought out. Another specialized session took as its theme the use of films in university teaching and a plan for inter-university co-operation on the international scale was set on foot. The film in industry was the subject of a final specialized meeting. Speakers from the major industries of Britain, from the Belgian FBI and its Ministry of Labour, from the National Film Board of Canada, and from the French industrial film organization, Service-Cinema-Interentreprises, gave some account of their problems and showed films. The working parties, set up at these specialized gatherings, organized by the appropriate Standing Committees of SFA, were given the blessing of the International Assembly.

On the margins, so to speak, of the Congress, there were a number of stimulating events. The Central Office of Information organized

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An Exhibition About Documentary Films?

by

PETER BRADFORD

DOCUMENTARY films have been made in Britain for almost twenty years, yet it is probable that less than one per cent of cinema-goers even now know what a documentary film is. The makes of documentary films may like to think that 'documentary is the conscience of the cinema' but as yet it certainly is not the conscience of the super cinema. The documentary kingdom remains the grim hall with its wooden benches and croaky 16 mm projector; it preaches mainly to the converted and the would-be converted. Until they can obtain wider showing in the ordinary cinema, these films must speak mainly to teachers or probation officers or tomato growers—in fact are bound to be for the most part 'specialized films'. While these specialized films will probably always be a major part of documentary production, there are also a number of films of general interest made, which deserve to be seen by the public as a whole, and there could be many more if the public knew enough about them to realize their potential value. As long as there is no demand for this kind of film, producers will only rarely and under special circumstances be able to make them. This problem is years old, and no one has made much progress towards a solution, but one way to create a greater interest in and knowledge of documentary films is to organize an exhibition about them, designed to explain in the simplest possible terms to anyone who may be coaxed inside the exhibition hall, what documentary films are doing, what they have done, what they hope to do, and how they are made.

In May of this year representatives of the British Film Institute, the British Council, COI, the British Film Academy, the Film Societies and British Documentary met to discuss a suggestion to produce an exhibition about documentary films. At the request of the meeting a sub-committee was formed of British Documentary and Film Society members to draw up a scheme of practical proposals. Incidentally, this sub-committee discovered that although Britain had pioneered the making of documentary films, there had never been an exhibition of this kind organized on the subject.

The sub-committee proposed that after explaining the wide field covered by documentary, the exhibition should give a brief history of the development of the documentary film, its purpose, and the technical methods it employed, and finally, after explaining the problems of distribution, show how the public themselves can get more documentary films shown.

The story of the exhibition would be told in a series of flat wall boards comprising brief text, stills and diagrams, to be grouped in four main sections.

- A. What is a documentary film?
- B. The history of documentary film-making.
- C. How a documentary film is made today.
- D. Who sees documentary films?

In between sections B and C would be technical apparatus in the middle of the room shown by a demonstrator. But the wall boards would be complete in themselves, and suitable for exhibition in other parts of the country. To design an exhibition for London alone would be to miss the point of having such an exhibition. It should be made available to schools, colleges, institutes, public libraries, museums and art galleries all over Britain.

It was also proposed that a film should be made, lasting ten to twenty minutes, which should be part of the exhibition if funds allowed. It would explain various points of technique. Among these points would be: appropriate and inappropriate camera angles, types of lighting, methods of directing, and methods of cutting both picture and sound. Here are details of part of the exhibition taken from the original report.

SECTION A. WHAT IS A DOCUMENTARY FILM?

Board 1. Are all these films documentaries?

A collection of stills of some films made by feature companies and some by documentary companies, designed to get the viewer asking himself about the meaning of documentary. Stills (with a brief caption below each) from:

Millions Like Us, Song of Ceylon, Target for Tonight, Atomic Physics, Paisa, World of Plenty, Scarface, Your Children's Eyes.

Board 2. Yes, they are ALL documentaries—Because they have a truthful approach.

This Board would consist only of text and would emphasize the documentary method in the choice and the approach to the subject.

Boards 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. A set of stills contrasting documentary and feature subjects and approach, e.g.

Reconstruction in a big studio against location. Use of people—for example, housewife in a feature film and housewife in a documentary.

SECTION C. HOW A DOCUMENTARY FILM IS MADE TODAY

Board 18. How a subject is chosen.

The film-maker finds a sponsor or the sponsor finds a film-maker.

How it is investigated. Examples of part of an actual treatment and shooting script.

Board 19. The Budget.

Showing a percentage breakdown of costs with possible contrast with feature costs.

Board 20. How the subject is made.

Introducing the producer and technicians by stills in order to establish them as persons and what they do.

Board 21. Stills of shooting on location and in a small studio.

Board 22. Cutting (sound and picture): laying of tracks, dubbing. Possibly demonstration panel showing principles of cutting using, say, *Night Mail* as an example, showing stills and Auden's verses, side by side with cutting positions marked.

Board 23. The work of the laboratories. Possibly a demonstration glass panel showing a mix, fade, dissolve, etc.

Board 24. Output.

Showing the number of documentary films produced in 1947. 'X' per cent suitable for general distribution, and 'Y' per cent designed specially for instructional or educational use. Of the total number suitable for general distribution only 'Z' per cent actually shown.

SECTION D. WHO SEES DOCUMENTARY FILMS?

Board 25. Difficulties in way of getting theatrical distribution in few brief captions, possibly with chart of distribution machinery.

Board 26. What gets into:

The ordinary cinema.

The specialist cinema.

Board 27. The development of non-theatrical distribution and in particular the work of the Film Society Movement.

Boards 28, 29. Specialized non-theatrical distribution. Use of films by schools, doctors, farmers, etc.

Board 30. The whole of this section to be in cartoon form—with a little cartoon figure giving these different suggestions.

If you want to see more of these films—

You can join a film society.

You can start a film society.

You can encourage your local authority to make use of its powers to show films under the new Local Government Act.

You can write to your local cinema manager.

If you have any other ideas let us have them. The exhibition would end with a blank pad of paper and a suggestion box beside it.

An exhibition of the sort proposed by the sub-committee outlined in this article would cost about a thousand pounds to design and assemble, and about another thousand to show in London, where an exhibition hall in a central position costs over a hundred pounds a week to hire. Last May a number of organizations were approached for money to make the exhibition possible, but as yet there have been no promises of help, except for the BFI, who suggested it might be suitable for the 1951 Exhibition.

In the meantime a much more immediate request for an exhibition about documentary came to British Documentary from the Edinburgh Festival committee. British Documentary and the British Film Academy agreed to share costs, and on £20 a small exhibition was produced for Edinburgh, based on the ideas of the full-scale exhibition. The Edinburgh exhibition contained the ideas of boards 4, 5, 6, 7, 21, 28, 29, and part of 26 dealing with the ordinary cinema, and was shown in Film House for three weeks. Subsequently, it was shown privately in London for a couple of days. As a result a number of Film Society secretaries have

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The Stuff of Documentary

THE MAKING OF A MAGAZINE STORY

by

LESLIE SHEPARD

EVERY FOUR weeks we make a cine-magazine. A one-reel news film with four items in each issue. Each item a miniature film.

Investigation

On the train you rummage through your satchel—pyjamas, toothbrush, soap and towel—and find the dope sheet. It may be a newspaper cutting, a typed quarto sheet, or just a scrap of paper with address and phone number of contacts and a scrawled mnemonic: 'Water is story but inter-cut production and watch men' . . . or something. This is your precognition of the sort of thing you expect to find.

On the train you let your imagination spread over the dope sheet. Keep fluid, supple, to find and shape your story.

You will have three hours to sort out the ingredients. Get the facts—find the story. It will run for a minute and a half with something like twenty-three shots. You can draw on commentary, music, effects, and occasionally synch. Have you ever tried to write a triolet? It's a very precise verse form with infinite variation possible in its rigid pattern. . . .

As well as your story (which you will script on the night train back or in the office within two hours next day) you will find out the routine details for lining-up—electricity supply, what lamps, time-tables, hotels, and so on. The item will be shot the day after tomorrow, unit returning by late train or following morning. The script will have passed through producer and sponsor, be fought and agreed in one afternoon. What is the story? There isn't one—yet! This is screen journalism.

That Export story. You spent the morning with the admin. boys at the docks, soaking up facts and figures; being told what to and what not to shoot; collecting data that would never register on celluloid. Then a junior employee guided you to a place you didn't want, but you kept him talking. Then you saw what you'd come down for—the desolate rail wagons, the broken rails running into pools of water—the shots, mind you, not the story.

But you kept a man talking and he wrote the story for you in the words of men who had lived with and by coal export; had seen prosperity, depression and the turn of the tide. The day when a ship brought foreign coal to a Welsh port and there were tears in the eyes of the men who unloaded her. And now, with coal being exported again, the images of that story were all around you—the men and the background. Trimming a cargo by the quay that held the ruined weigh-sheds where the seagulls and the man on the job ruffled the broken balance and rippled the reflection of the truck wheel, axle-deep in water. . . . That queer little feeling when you find the right pieces; they fall together and have a truth of their own.

Of course it never passed through that way. That was only part of the job. You took the

shots—yes!—stole them while pretending to get something else, but the sponsors wanted a broad canvas for the story, not epitome. This or that policy line wasn't quite right. They wanted you to squeeze in something the Press hand-out and the *Picture Post* story had said. . . . What of it? We re-vamped the story, fighting all the way. Two units worked over different locations and the new story fell together with the pieces of the old. The item was made on time.

You wonder if you'll make it this time. Something is going on somewhere, if you can see it, feel it, and record it. On how many other stories have you arrived in a strange place faced by an unexciting fact? You don't rush at it. Get people and let them talk. Watch. Waste time, but keep them talking, while your mind waits for the old magic—the pattern that turns the facts into a story.

Shooting

On the train you chatted to the other two or three people who were there to help you shoot it. A cameraman and perhaps two assistants. Perhaps you played a bit upstage, knowing that different technicians have different temperaments.

The cameraman was your working partner for the next day's shooting. George was slow, indecisive; you had to talk deadpan facetious on the job to keep him going, be calm and never show the indecision you felt yourself. Michael was quick, competent and irritable. You had to fight him for the set-ups. If you

hesitated he'd be taking them himself. Always be one move ahead asking for the scenes and have some brave talk to justify what you were doing. Let him take over a scene you didn't really want, to keep the rhythm of work and get the essential ones without fuss. When you were older, perhaps, you would dominate people, the big, confident director. Action! In the meantime, these were early days. You really knew when the cameraman pulled you through on that pan with six characters (big stuff!) and you knew you made the item with those two cut-ins that he didn't want to take. A unit on a magazine story is small and compact enough to work out these things.

There wouldn't always be a script. There's a kind of story that is nearer to newsreel proper. You have to make a 'coverage'. This means you script the item in the camera. No second takes and no waiting for sun. You have an hour for the key establishing shots while you're waiting for the action, then for the scenes that the cameraman makes or breaks, because he must take over half your directing now.

But you watch all the time for the sort of thing that illuminates the action. Sometimes it happens in front of your eyes and you will have to reconstruct it. Sometimes a whisper to the cameraman and a little distraction will get the shot while the reality is still in it.

All the while you figure out how this or that is going to cut. You've had three key mid-shots—pegs for the editor, but on one of these you're committed on direction of action for the cut-ins (when you get a chance to get them)

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Manhunt

by

ERIC GOLDSCHMIDT

WHEN YOU'RE stuck for a turn at your party, or when shuffling into a barber's chair, when stumped for a conversational opening or grazing on lush Devonshire meadows, when you wish to knock the idle hours between 5 and 5.30 with a particularly effective cudgel, try my new parlour game. It consists of marrying the word 'documentary' to as many disinterested parties as you can find. Documentary theatre, documentary materialism, documentary election platforms are easy ones. Documentary Court circulars, company reports and encyclicals shouldn't be precluded as time goes by.

In Melbourne, Australia, my landlord, 46-year-old Fred Pick, manufacturing kitchenware, gave me the book of *The Producer* as a Christmas present. This, since it contained a chapter entitled 'The Film at War' and Pick had been at war with films for years. Too expensive, he said. I began reading the book of *The Producer* with much alacrity. I pictured Him as being a member of history's great family of producers, like Thales the Miletian (who produced the universe out of nothing-with-water), St Thomas the Aquinas and Duns the Scot (who produced the universe out of class distinctions and after-thoughts), and Marx (who annihilated the universe with practically the same armoury).

This Producer, then, established a universe with celluloid and ideas. The more I considered this formula in Melbourne, Australia, the more I became convinced that one must investigate these cosmic complications. One must go to America, obviously, in order to get the proper cosmic outlook. And this I set out to do.

Here we bring in some quick-fire transformations. Let's have the contract towards the US Immigration authorities whereby I undertake not to assassinate the President of the US or his lawful wife. And then the chinless mate of the 'Marine Phoenix' who refuses me a job, followed by an ocean scene where I'm aboard ship, casually mixing with the passengers and being supplied with cheese biscuits and sticks of celery. Since the ship passes through the tropics, we'll have a sweating night-watchman who paces up and down, cursing all stowaways, while I sleep guilelessly in a private bath-tub, where the climate isn't hard on me but the unbending pressed steel shape of the tub isn't so good.

For a laugh we'll introduce Father, of the Australian version of 'Life with Father'. He's written a play which no Australian publisher will tackle and he's happy aboard organizing competitions for teen-agers. He was a zestful old soak with hair dyed bright orange. 'Why do you run around like this off-stage?' I asked—and Father replied: 'Boy, I've been in show business for 37 years. If you'd been in show business that long, you'd dye your hair lime green.' And a nippy-looking passenger turns

round at this point, sighing 'Ah, yes! How green was my father.'

To describe the sea journey a little more dramatically, we'll have three one-minute episodes (a) when I developed a skin rash and a negro steward called Virtue (the less said about this, the better) went into the surgery for some Vitamin C tablets, (b) when on the last night aboard, everyone dressed and I had to rake up a pontoon school smartly so that my shirt sleeves wouldn't attract any attention (previous sartorial snares had occurred during boat drills) and (c) when it was all over, when Father had given me the all-clear and I had pushed down the crew's gangway with an outdated pass and sat in a pub in San Francisco called 'Mark Hopkins', when fourteen courses of food arrived unendingly and I begged for biscuits and a few sticks of celery, which hadn't happened since the day of Aimee Semple McPherson.

From there we'll hitch-hike 500 miles south to Los Angeles. We see the blessed blend of Spanish architecture, American oil interests and scenic resilience. We'll drive past garages, drug stores, realtors, junk jewellery shops; garages, realtors, junk jewellery shops, drug stores. For ten miles—nothing but: this is Hollywood.

A few inquiries established that the Producer had been here all right, though he's left for Mexico and the odds are he'll arrive in New York. The Producer doesn't seem to thrive on Californian voodoo, and when I stated that screen tests, Readers Digests and the Huntington Library were of no interest to me, that only a conversation with the Producer would end my journeys, people outstripped their daily superlatives declaring me to be the 'most out of this worldst, fluid driven jerk they'd ever laid eyes on'. The Cultural Relations Division of the State Department is in agreement with this, and shipped me to New York.

This gives me an opportunity of sliding right through the chromium-plated paradise, past a drought in Salt Lake City, past the genuine corn belt, past the indictment to civilization called Chicago. In New York an ex-GI sold me a beautiful Papuan amulet reciting the string of bad luck he'd had while carting it around. This was in West 56th Street, where I'd just been told the Producer was leaving for Britain within a day or two.

To cut a long story short, I arrived in London full of cussedness and un-American intentions. At the time of the Graphic Arts Conference I was an usher in a West End cinema, seeing *Spring in Park Lane* until I did.

The conference was the shot though. It had been arranged in honour of the Producer whom I thought of tackling during the lunch break. Instead I ran into another Australian bum who blew his top about restrictive practices in the ACT and how Britain assists the Australian economy by breeding hogs in Queensland.

After the Chairman had passed a vote of thanks, it was 6.30 and there was no point in going back to the cinema. Besides, I felt a hunter's pride in having seen the Producer with my naked eye. I got to know that he stayed in the Exmouth Hotel. So I stocked up some sandwiches, settling in at the Exmouth lounge in order to clinch the matter.

I spent some two hours ignoring a battery of nosey bell boys, lift attendants, house detectives and mustard-ridden stooges with braided lapels. Once a particularly wide dame stared at me as if my newspaper concealed malicious intent, instead of sandwiches. But I've played poker with characters worse than this, and I acted as if she had a run in clubs and no more, which was indeed the case.

By eleven I'd telephoned the switch and got His room number. The lounge was emptying out and I arrived on the fourth floor as if I was quite somebody else who'd never squatted in the foyer at all.

There were some chairs at the end of the corridor and I started on the sandwiches, quietly and in keeping with the hotel's well-bred chastity. A trio of drunks could be heard, business people evidently who had made a night of it and couldn't stop haggling. I thought I'd humour them when they stood in front of me, calling me 'George' and asking if I had a sandwich to spare. 'Certainly,' I said and gave them one, when they contrived a tutti of no mean size. They were house detectives again. They would invoke the Vagrancy Act, and dial 999. Within twenty seconds of this speech I could see that all the publicity which had been put out on behalf of the Exmouth Hotel was complete moonshine. I scrambled, chasing past the phalanx of bell boys, night waiters, hall porters and doormen, confusedly mashing a string of sausages in the revolving door.

The only thing I could do, was to see Him early in the morning and I went to Lyons in order to pass the time with a cup of coffee every hour. The rest of that night... the sharpies and shysters and chauffeurs... shindigs with Welsh football fans and shandies at Covent Garden... it's hard to sort it out chronologically and it doesn't matter, anyhow.

At eight-thirty in the morning He spoke to me. Could I interview Him, I asked, on behalf of 'Newsweek'; my editor, I added, was bothered about the fundamental education of—of—Sam Goldwyn. He admonished me not to talk rubbish, moreover He'd dined with the editor of 'Newsweek' only ten days ago. I then clicked the telephone a couple of times and switched over to the dry-cleaned accent of George Sanders. 'News Review,' I fluted. He must have misunderstood me. He referred me to His secretary for details.

As I came back from the barber's I noticed Him in the dining room. And this was a moment of timeless delight. Between cereals and kipper I told Him the whole story and He apologized for being in such a hurry. His train would leave for Brussels very shortly, but on His return, in three weeks, I must ring Him up.

That happened three months ago. He's extremely busy now and I'm told by His secretary that Empire questions cram His time-table. To make quite sure of talking to Him, I'm going to Melbourne, Australia, where He is due to arrive within the next month or two. I shall stand on the wharf with streamers and throw them towards his boat. And He, I'm sure, will throw back celluloid and ideas—at last.

Edinburgh in Retrospect

by

BASIL WRIGHT

IT MIGHT be worth inquiring first what purpose is intended to be served by holding an international festival of documentary. It is presumably something more than—to paraphrase the late Miss Stein—'a festival is a festival is a festival'. The Edinburgh affair lasted three weeks, on every day of which there was a minimum of two shows; and all but a few shows were packed out, people being turned away even at the 2,000-seater Caley cinema.

What did they expect and want, and what did they get, these 20,000 odd folk who came trooping to Film House, to the Caley, the Rutland (children's films), and the Central Hall (educational films)? Incidentally the competition was pretty fierce, what with such plums as *The Three Estates*, the Glyndebourne Opera, Barrault in *Hamlet*, the Ballet, the Huddersfield Choir, Menuhin, Cortot, Boyd Neel, the Halle, Concertgebouw, the Augusteo, and the boozing.

In any case it didn't seem a particularly specialized audience. There were, of course, distinguished documentary practitioners from overseas, and a regular trickle of celebrities from other walks of life. There were even a few—a very few—documentary people from the British Isles. But the great majority seemed to be ordinary folk interested in documentary, a fact which perhaps we shouldn't be as surprised at as we sometimes are. Norman Wilson, Forsyth Hardy and their Edinburgh Film Guild colleagues certainly took a risk, on money and on prestige, in running the Festival, and I think they, too, were surprised at its success; but they shouldn't be, because the interest shown in documentary is due, amongst other things, to the vigorous and voluntary propaganda carried out over some twenty years by progressive bodies like the Guild.

Apart from people who came because they couldn't get in anywhere else, or out of idle curiosity, the great majority of the audiences sought, I imagine, a survey of the use of film for social purpose in countries all over the world, a comparison with what is being done here, and, not least, the stimulus on creative and aesthetic levels which can and should arise from this particular sort of film-making. To provide these things and especially to provide sources of stimulation and emulation to both makers and users, was the purpose of the Festival.

It is fair to say that the purpose was well fulfilled. The films came from many countries,

and showed great variety of technique. On some levels they were as interesting for their similarities as for their contrasts; for instance, the Yugoslavian film on Child Welfare differed hardly at all from the films on the same subject from other countries—this more particularly as regards the techniques of child care shown. Here you had a reminder of the internationale of special interests which the documentary movement sets out to serve.

More importantly, the festival revealed an enormous variety as well. Apart from the steady flow of competent, reasonably interesting films on the bread and butter level there were, thank goodness, a really encouraging number of creative and exciting jobs, and not a few technical experiments. I would say that the proportion of films which left vivid and lasting impressions of a high order was remarkably high. Here, at any rate, is one observer's list.

There were eleven films of the highest order. Of these I put William Levitt's *The Quiet One* right at the top. This 16 mm production, obviously made on something less than a shoe-string, deals with problems of juvenile delinquency in the New York area, and centres on the case of one particular negro boy. It shows causes, effects, and the problems not only of cure but also of those social conditions which provide every opportunity for recurrence. I'm not competent to judge the psychological techniques concerned, though they are clearly not altogether the same as those in this country, any more than the emotional attitude to the question has much similarity with that revealed in such films as *Children of the City* or *Children on Trial*; but it is quite certain that *The Quiet One* is on all counts one of the most brilliant efforts at presenting a case history ever to be put on the screen. It has a splendid script, brilliant and disturbing use of sound, and intimate shooting of life in the raw of a sort seldom if ever achieved. It is to be hoped that *DFN* will find space for a full review of this film.

Next on the list I would put Henri Storck's seven-reel film on *Rubens*. Not only is this a *tour de force* of film-making (with some interesting technical innovations) but also it opens up completely new vistas in the use of film for the study and analysis of the visual arts.

Then, of course, Flaherty's *Louisiana Story*, a piece of sustained poetry which should surely

give enormous satisfaction to everyone other than those who still want Flaherty to be something other than what he is.

Add Rossellini's *Germany Year Zero*—a wavering cry of despair, uneven in technique but finally redeemed by the searing intensity of the last three reels; Eldridge's two imaginative and often brilliant films *Three Dawns to Sydney* and *Waverley Steps*; Vedrès' astonishing compilation *Paris 1900*, which re-creates the atmosphere and mystique of a period in a way which reveals new possibilities in adding a more intimate reality to history teaching; Yannik Bellon's extraordinary study *Goëmons*, reminiscent at times of Vigo; Crawley's strangely moving Indian legend in colour, *The Loon's Necklace*, told entirely by means of British Columbian Indian masks; *Nettezza Urbana*, an Italian documentary which brings to the prosaic subject of street-cleaning qualities of visuals and sound which remind one of some of the earlier GPO experiments like *Coal-face*; and Sucksdorff's *Divided World*, an amazing *tour de force* about the kill-or-be-killed life of a northern forest at night.

If space allowed I could add another list of runners-up—another dozen at least; I could refer to the impact of the Canadian films, which came in such variety of subject matter and style (as well as numbers) that they had special shows; and I could mention three films which tied for the booby prize—and one alas! was British.

It seems likely that next year the Festival will be repeated. In that case the committee ought to consider one or two points. Firstly, Film House only seats 60, and despite repeat programmes this is quite inadequate to deal with the potential audiences. If a larger hall could be found, the small Film House theatre could be used for more specialized shows; this is something the Festival has hitherto lacked. Secondly, some thought should be given to trying to build more of the programmes round specific purposes, and not confine this, as at present, to the special shows of educational and children's films. Thirdly, if lectures are to be given, as they were this year, time and place must be geared to attract an audience.

These are minor criticisms however. The Festival provides a unique chance to observe the achievements of documentary on a global level. Is it too much to hope that next year something will be done to encourage British Documentary workers to attend?

The Stuff of Documentary

(Continued from page 100)

and you need a reconstructed covering long shot after the real action is finished. You watch for position and obvious continuity.

On any story you might need to work out how a sequence of six scenes on a long cut story can say the same thing in only three of the scenes if the story has to be cut short. You learn your savers, but you try to economize on footage, because no magazine editor has time to think about a two thousand foot rough assembly for a two hundred foot cut length story.

Once in a while, there's the story on margin. Deadline for everything—one day. You went down to a factory with a cameraman; investigated, scripted and lined up for lamps in a couple of hours. Script okayed by telephone. When the lamps came in two hours later you shot the story. In the tea-break you telephoned a commentary to the crew standing by the microphone—final commentary session for the issue. No time for opticals; you did the fade-in in the camera. Two days later with the issue mixing on time you were on another story. . . . You pleased the editor that time because every set-up was used and nothing was missing. It was not an epic—it was just an eighty-foot magazine item.

Editing

Dick, who puts the pieces together in the cutting-room at lightning speed, is an old newsreel man. He has your continuity sheets and a script, but could work without either. If it's on film he knows what you're after. If it's

not there he'll tell you—and if you want to learn you'll listen.

There is a logic to this sort of film that you learn by painful experience when the producer and editor see your rushes. You can't use those long beloved pans, all of twenty feet a time. That complex sequence on a simple action between three people must go in two six-foot cuts or be left on the floor. The finished item is something like two hundred feet—remember?—and if you shoot in thirty-foot key scenes there will be sore heads.

This sort of film is like a *Time* news-story. In a script of twenty-three odd shots, with commentary, music and effects, everything counts. If it's not essential why put it in? No room to spread yourself on high-falutin' build-up. No room for commentary clichés. It finds you out.

You can't get by with a brush-off job. You have to feel it and mean it. That line about 'Hard work?—yes!—But these men are doing a great job' or '... these women are doing a man's job'. The machinery sequence that reads: 'From rough castings the cones are machined to specification. Great care is needed in checking these cones because they house the all-important lens.' Out!

The magazine item has a form and balance all its own. In journalism the key phrase, the right adjective. In film, the right image married to the essential word.

Of course, when you've created a masterpiece it's hard to have a sponsor fiddle with the commentary on the final check-up before recording. If you weren't on a magazine film it might keep you awake at nights composing a *DFN* article about what's wrong. It can be

hard when the telephones of three. Government departments converge on one sheet of foolscap while the commentary session ticks away and the recordist gets impatient. But the arts and crafts of film direction don't begin and end on location. And a sense of proportion is the first part of your film conscience.

After eight months of this, where are you going?

I built a coal mine in South Wales. I sunk a shaft at Nottingham. Between twenty locations I counted a few sequences; I lost ten feet at Derby. By way of Victoria and St Pancras I captured sight and sound of many men working; King's Cross and Paddington carried a pattern of words. By night train to Scotland I crossed a border of thought.

What's the next assignment?

On the train, you hope this one will be a straightforward policy story that will run so sweetly that nobody will niggle. Because you know in the last corner of your mind that if a story is good enough—if it is observed, imagined and recorded with that spark of art which the cameraman, editor and director who share the creative experience are too embarrassed to mention—then it speaks for itself. It's the raw stuff of documentary—the image of life and truth in a pin-sized magazine story. But this evening, just after birth, it will look very raw and naked on its clean sheet of foolscap, and very tempting to play with. It has god-parents—producer and sponsors—who will have their own ideas about education. . . . Can you move them?

But certain problems are not your affair, although you should know about them. Two organizers and a producer hatch this magazine at weekly conferences with the sponsors. There is a plan of work and a policy line on every item. You may not believe that the weight of the gap between fact and film lies elsewhere than in this smoky railway carriage—but have we ever let you down yet?

Investigation—one day, including travelling; scripting—same evening or next day; laid on for shooting tomorrow or the day after. Four items a month.

Other films can boast an eight to twelve week investigation; a theme with social implications and high policy. Not for the magazine the paper thought and political negotiation, the firm stand and protracted compromise. Good, bad or promising the item is shot, and next week—perhaps tomorrow—you will be making another journey. This way a young technician learns in film—writes in celluloid. Paper is something shed in the dead files two days later.

In the train . . . wondering whether the old magic will work. That little tinge of apprehension that you pray to keep, compounded of excitement, curiosity and imagination. This is screen journalism. On the job again, you are playing with the raw material of documentary—the making of a magazine item.

DATA

Member of the Federation
of Documentary Film Units

has delivered during
the month of September

MINING REVIEW: 2ND SERIES: NUMBER 2

Miners on the Land: Davy Lamp on a Training Course: Children's Gala: Sinking a new Pit

SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES

A film for the Scottish Home Department, directed by Francis Gysin, photographed by W. Suschitzky

BRITISH STEEL

A second progress report on the Steel Company of Wales' Development Scheme for showing in South America

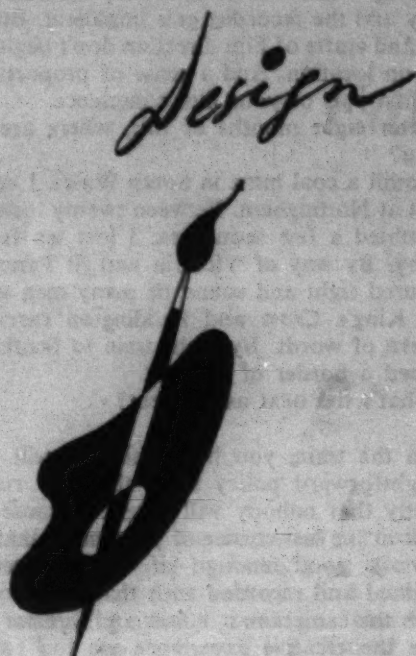
PROBATION OFFICER

A thirty-minute story to recruit new Probation Officers, directed by J.B. Holmes, photographed by James Ritchie, written by Budge Cooper

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Documentary Film News

We regret that it has been necessary to produce Sept-Oct as one issue. Similarly, there will be one number to cover the remainder of the year. Monthly publication will begin again in January.



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D for Denmark

Documentary in Denmark 1940-48 is the title of an impressive catalogue just published by the Danish Central Film Library in English. One hundred films about Danish life are listed against the changing background of the last eight years of war, occupation, liberation and peace. Attractively presented with plenty of stills as well as informative detail, the catalogue is well worth looking at.

In an introduction Arthur Elton has paid tribute to the achievements of the movement which made these films possible. The effective growth of the Danish documentary group dates from 1940 and the German invasion. Over the subsequent years it did a great deal to keep alive the country's traditions and way of living. At the end of the war, the movement emerged, confident and skilled. It had produced many films it could be proud of, and it had made its own particular contribution to documentary film-making. It had brought in wit and humour and a warm sense of life. The pity is that relatively so few of these films have been made available in Britain, apart from festival performances. This is one of the directions in which this catalogue should be of positive value.

A further publication, *Motion Pictures in Denmark* by Ebbe Neergaard, the director of the Danish Central Film Library, has also just appeared in English. It gives a clear and readable picture of the Danish cinema business with particular reference to the production and exhibition of documentary films.

All commercial exhibition of films is regulated by a Cinema Act of 1938. Among its various provisions, there is one which might well produce alarm and confusion in the ranks of British exhibitors if it were applied in this country.

'The licensee (the manager) shall attend to the management of the picture theatre in

person and have the artistic responsibility for the same. In the choice of films the licensee shall take care that such films as are exhibited are from a cultural and artistic point of view the most valuable. He shall not be prevented by any agreement from deciding freely and independently on the repertoire of the theatre and the rest of its management.'

As a result of this Act there are no foreign-owned cinemas in Denmark and no circuits. In addition it lays down that a part of every cinema performance can be reserved for the showing of cultural and educational value. These films are distributed to cinemas free by the Central Film Library. In this way some fifteen to twenty documentary films get cinema distribution each year. Production finance is provided from a Film Fund which is supported by a levy on the net profits of the cinemas.

Neergaard's pamphlet contains a lot of information of this kind which is well worth study and comparison. In fact, the pamphlet and the catalogue, together with the September issue of the *Dansk Filmforbund Bulletin* which is an international number published in English, give an up-to-date and encouraging picture of the state of documentary in Denmark.

Documentary in Denmark 1940-48, published by Statens Filmcentral, Copenhagen, 1948. Price 5s.

Motion Pictures in Denmark, by Ebbe Neergaard, published by Statens Filmcentral, Copenhagen, 1948.

Dansk Filmforbund Bulletin, special international issue, Vol. 2, No. 10, September 1948.

The introduction to *Documentary in Denmark* was printed in the October 1947 issue of *DNL*. Copies of this catalogue and of *Dansk Filmforbund Bulletin* are on sale at Film Centre, prices 5s. and 1s. respectively.

ISFA Congress

(Continued from page 98)

a discussion meeting between producers of scientific films, at which John Grierson and Denis Forman introduced to their foreign colleagues the older and the rising generations of scientific film-makers in Britain. The Royal Microscopical Society invited delegates to a reception at which they and some hundreds of British microscopists saw a programme of films by Percy Smith, Dr R. G. Canti, and contemporary specialists, introduced by Dr Arthur Hughes. As a pendant to the Congress, the Sciences Committee of SFA organized on October 12 a whole day conference on the film in scientific research, presided over by Sir Robert Watson-Watt. The Congress ended with a reception to delegates, given by the British Council.

This, breathlessly and inadequately, is the

stop-press résumé of the work of the second International Scientific Film Congress. Twenty-five countries and UNESCO accepted the invitation to be present. Next year, the International Association will meet in Brussels, to take stock of what was set in train at the 1948 London Congress.

Mr John Maddison was elected a Vice-President of the ISFA for the coming year. The other Vice-President is Clifford Burmeston of the National Library of Australia. The President is Jean Korngold of Poland, the Hon Secretary, Jean Painlevé of France, and the Hon Treasurer, Luc Haesserts of Belgium.

Films Shown at Edinburgh

Owing to the large number of films shown at Edinburgh this year we are unable to publish full critical reviews. The following is a survey of the films shown, classified according to the country of origin together with a brief summary of the theme.

ARGENTINE

Sleeping Villages (23 minutes). A survey of the life and customs of the Colla Indians, an obscure nomadic tribe, which lives in the desolate highlands on the borders of Argentine, Chile and Bolivia.

AUSTRALIA

Britain Down Under (20 minutes). A picture of Tasmania, illustrating its close resemblance in customs, climate and geography to those of the British Isles.

Honey Blossom Trail (11 minutes). The story of how an Australian bee-keeper maintains his supply of honey by moving his hives from one area to another as the blossoms become exhausted.

Spotlight on Australian Ballet (50 minutes). This film tells the story of the development of native ballet companies and ballet in Australia. It also includes a number of excerpts from classical ballets.

AUSTRIA

The Organ, Queen of Instruments (23 minutes). An historical survey of the principles and development of the organ, leading up to the rebuilding of the great organ upon which Anton Bruckner composed much of his music, and a performance of his *Te Deum*.

BELGIUM

Agneau Mystique (9 minutes). A detailed examination of the famous Van Eyck triptych of the Paschal Lamb at Ghent.

Chansons de Toile (12 minutes). Flax-growing and the preparation of linen in Belgium, together with examples of some of the uses to which the finest linens are put, such as the weaving of tapestry, etc.

Rubens (70 minutes). A study of the painter Rubens, his life and his art. A brilliant use of the camera aided by the superimposition of lines reveals the painter's ideas and discloses aspects of form and composition, which make this an outstanding example of the contribution that the film can make to the appreciation of art.

The World of Paul Delvaux (10 minutes). An analysis of the work of the surrealist painter Paul Delvaux, in which clever cutting and camera movement combine to give a vivid pic-

ture not only of the technique but also of the mind of the artist.

BRITAIN

A Plan to Work On (28 minutes). This film illustrates the solution of some of the problems of town planning, based upon the evolution of a town planning scheme for Dunfermline.

Avalanche Patrol (25 minutes). A film, made in Switzerland, which shows the precautions which are taken to safeguard against damage from avalanches.

Charting the Seas (20 minutes). A survey of the Hydrographic Service of the Navy, which shows details of the way in which sea depths, tides, wrecks, coast lines, etc., are charted.

Eyes to See With (19 minutes). The importance of using one's eyes. This film takes for its theme the idea that many people miss much of the beauty of the world because they do not use their eyes sufficiently, and illustrates some of the things which can be experienced if they develop their powers of observation.

Hill Sheep Farm (22 minutes). The life and problems of the Scottish hill sheep farmer through the cycle of the year.

Lord Siva Dances (23 minutes). Made partly in India, this film shows examples of classical Indian dances and their modern variations in different parts of the country.

Mining Review No. 10 (10 minutes). One of a series of monthly magazines, produced for the National Coal Board. It includes items on fluorescent lighting, dust suppression, women canteen workers and scenes from a May-day gala in Edinburgh.

New Town (10 minutes). A cartoon illustrating the importance and the improvements in health and amenities which will result from the new satellite towns which are now being planned.

Precise Measurements for Engineers (32 minutes). The work of the Metrology Department of the National Physical Laboratory in making and checking the gauges and other standards which are essential for accuracy in all engineering work.

School in Cologne (17 minutes). Made with the assistance of German technicians, this film shows the physical and human difficulties which the authorities face in trying to rebuild an educational system in war-ravaged Germany.

Scottish Universities (21 minutes). The history, traditions, difficulties and future possibilities of the four Scottish universities, St Andrew's, Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Steps of the Ballet (30 minutes). An explanation of the basic steps of ballet dancing, followed by a demonstration of the growth and development of a completed ballet.

The Edge of the World (65 minutes). This feature film is a revised edition of the earlier one of the same name. It tells the story of the life of members of a community on the remote island of Foula in the Hebrides. Cut off from the mainland in winter, they live in the primitive conditions of their forefathers the year round. But eventually difficulties are too great and they leave to seek their fortune on the mainland.

The Story of Printing (42 minutes). Part of a visual unit, this film, which is divided into sections, tells with model simplicity and clarity the story of the origins and development of printing from the earliest time to the present day.

They Travel By Air (22 minutes). Designed as a staff training film, this shows in an amusing fashion the difficulties that BOAC personnel must expect and the importance of the service they render to their passengers.

Three Dawns to Sydney (61 minutes). Flying from Britain to Australia, the aeroplane is a link between many different people in many different countries. The film tells the story of an incident in the life of people in Sicily, Palestine, India, Singapore and Australia respectively, as the plane passes over them.

Waverley Steps (31 minutes). This is a film about Edinburgh, which attempts to evoke its atmosphere by interweaving a number of small unconnected incidents in the life of people who live there.

Your Children's Sleep (22 minutes). Designed for parents, this film shows how children need sleep for their physical and mental development. It illustrates some of the causes of bad or disturbed sleep, which with understanding and good management can be overcome.

Your Very Good Health (11 minutes). A cartoon which illustrates the advantages of the new National Health Insurance scheme.

BULGARIA

Men of the Mists (19 minutes). A story of the lives of the men who man the meteorological stations in the high mountains of Bulgaria and who thereby provide a weather forecasting service of great importance.

CANADA

A Feeling of Hostility (25 minutes). This is the second in a series designed to illustrate the psychological background of social maladjustment. It tells the story of a girl who, because

of her home background, grew up in a state of emotional insecurity and with a longing for love which she could not satisfy. The result in her case was high achievement, but at the expense of personal satisfaction in her relations with other people.

Boogie Doodle; Hoppity Pop; Marching the Colours (3 minutes each). In these three abstract colour cartoons, made by Norman McLaren, patterns, shapes and colours dance and weave to the music of gay little tunes.

Home Town Paper (22 minutes). A story of life in a Canadian small town community centred round the local weekly newspaper, which reports their lives and doings.

Horizons du Quebec (30 minutes). A lively account of the factors, historical, racial, rural and industrial, which have contributed to make Quebec what it is today.

Hungry Minds (10 minutes). In feeding the bodies of the hungry children of the world the needs of their minds are often forgotten. The film stresses the need for an adequate supply of books and facilities for learning in many countries.

Inside the Atom (11 minutes). A brief account of the source and some of the possible uses of atomic energy.

It's Fun To Sing (11 minutes). The pleasures of amateur choir singing, based on the activities of the Bell singers, a small amateur choir which is famous in Canada.

Making Bread in the 13th Century (4 minutes). A short cartoon with a rhymed commentary whose theme is that of the title.

Stanley Takes a Trip (9 minutes). A colour cartoon for children, which explains the importance of a balanced diet and the different constituents which it should include.

The Connors Case (35 minutes). A reconstruction of an authentic case from the files of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, showing how every device of modern science is used in the tracking down and eventual capture of a murderer.

The Loon's Necklace (10 minutes). Played by characters wearing original native masks, this delightful film reconstructs a Columbian Indian legend about the way in which the Loon got the white ring round his neck.

Maps We Live By (10 minutes). Made for the United Nations, this film stresses the international importance of maps, traces briefly the history of map-making up to the modern system of aerial contour photography, and illustrates some of their uses.

Who Will Teach Your Child (31 minutes). The importance of teaching to children and, therefore, to the community. The film uses dramatized incidents to illustrate the scope of the good teacher's job and the factors which can keep them away from teaching resulting in the use of untrained and unsuitable teachers. Teaching should be a profession, of importance second to none.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Made in Czechoslovakia (11 minutes). Partly in colour, this film shows examples of the

beautiful work produced by the skill of Czech glass-workers.

DENMARK

Breaking the Ice (9 minutes). The story of the Danish ice-breakers which keep the channel separating Copenhagen from the mainland free from ice so that the shipping which must supply the city can get through during the winter.

Children of Poland (12 minutes). The care of starving Polish children by the Danish Red Cross after the war.

Danish Village Church (12 minutes). The development of village churches in Denmark from the old small and plain Romanesque churches to the more elaborate examples of Gothic architecture, which are built on and around them.

Bitte Child of Man (101 minutes). Every minute a child is born; what will be its fate? Posing this question, this, a feature film of much power and beauty, directed by Henning Jensen, tells the story of a girl, born illegitimate, poor and unwanted, who suffers misfortune after misfortune until finally she herself returns home pregnant. Her unassuming goodness and love survive all her miseries, and one is left with the feeling that in her uncomplaining acceptance, the evil done to her is somehow turned to something positive and good.

Kutter H.71 (10 minutes). The building and launching of a Danish trawler.

Paper (13 minutes). A brief but lively account of the history of paper-making and its innumerable uses today.

Shaped by Danish Hands (15 minutes). An account of Danish skill and craftsmanship in the design and making of pottery and furniture.

They Reached a Ferry (11 minutes). The dangers of speeding on a motor cycle. Carl Dreyer's script, with its masterly control of tempo and suspense, make this a brilliant and terrifying lesson in Road Safety.

Those Blasted Kids (94 minutes). This feature film, also directed by Henning Jensen, tells the story of the adventures of a group of children from a block of working-class flats in Copenhagen when tracking down the thief who had falsely 'framed' the caretaker who befriended them. The acting of the children is spontaneous and delightful.

EIRE

Next Please (11 minutes). A road safety film, showing examples of the stupid actions of pedestrians and motorists and the consequences.

FRANCE

Aubusson (15 minutes). The revival of the ancient craft of tapestry weaving at Aubusson. The film shows the work of the artist in designing the tapestry as well as the work of the weavers in translating the design into reality.

Goemons (24 minutes). A brilliant if depressing study of life on a small island off the coast of France, where under conditions of virtual slavery, a small group of men harvest seaweed.

La Rose et La Reseda (8 minutes). This is an attempt to provide a visual interpretation of a poem by Louis Aragon commemorating the shooting of two members of the French Resistance movement by the Germans. The poem

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itself is beautifully spoken by Jean Louis Barrault.

Les-Santons (28 minutes). A legend current in Provence of happenings on Christmas Eve has been made into a ballet, and is shown here danced by the ballet company of the Paris Opera.

Paris 1900 (76 minutes). This is a remarkable compilation of life in Paris between 1900 and 1914 made from contemporary material. Politicians, statesmen, royalty, artists, comedians, great figures of the stage, fashions and a number of odd items are all interwoven to provide a fascinating picture of the period. The film owes much to its music by Guy Bernard, which is as pointed and witty as the film itself.

GERMANY

Hunger (13 minutes). Designed for German audiences, this film clearly and simply drives home the fact that hunger is not a German monopoly. As a result of the war, world food production is inadequate for the needs of its people. It points to the responsibility of the Germans for this situation and indicates the remedies which they themselves must take.

It's Up To You (16 minutes). This film contrasts two Germanies—the ancient, beautiful, peace-loving, industrious Germany with the brutal, bellicose, regimented Germany which has so recently led them to disaster. Which path they will follow is their choice for the future.

ITALY

Bianchi Pascoli (15 minutes). A beautifully photographed film which shows the Allied war graves in Italy and how the Italians are tending them.

Citta Senza Tempo (11 minutes). Life in the town of Pompeii is described as the camera surveys the ruins.

Corteo dei Re Magi (11 minutes). A study of the painting by Gossoli of the coming of the three kings of Bethlehem.

Dramma Di Christo (11 minutes). A study of the life of Christ built up with masterly skill from the frescoes of Giotto in the Schrovegni Chapel, Padua.

Germany Year Zero (80 minutes). This, Rossellini's latest feature, is a bleak study of Berlin in defeat. The story centres round a small boy, Edmund, whose father is ill, whose elder brother is hiding from the police and, therefore, cannot work, and whose sister is driven to frequent night clubs in the hope of getting food and cigarettes from Allied soldiers. Edmund keeps the family going by bartering on the Black Market, and stealing what he can. He is persuaded to poison his father, but later, overcome by doubts and remorse, he himself commits suicide.

Nettezza Urbana (12 minutes). A delightful human study of the street-cleaners in Italy.

Romantici a Venezia (11 minutes). Venice as it would have appeared to some of the great romantics who visited it. The sound track repeats the words of Byron, de Musset, D'Annunzio and Chopin, as the camera shows us the city.

Zoo di Petra (6 minutes). A study of the domestic sculpture of the Romans from the Vatican museum which by brilliant editing succeeds in giving a sense of life and movement to the static carvings of animals.

INDIA

Mother (12 minutes), *Child* (18 minutes). These are the first two films of a series made for the United Nations dealing with the Indian Village Welfare services. They show an interesting picture of life in primitive villages and the difficulties which face the trained social workers who try to persuade them to more hygienic methods of living. The first deals with maternity care, the second with child welfare. Designed for native audiences, the tempo is slow and the treatment simple.

NORWAY

The Battle of Heavy Water (91 minutes). Made in co-operation with the French this is an exciting reconstruction of the struggle to get possession of the stocks of heavy water, essential for atomic research, and to sabotage the heavy water factory in Norway. The parts of the saboteurs are played by the men who were actually responsible for the work, and every incident is shown as it happened in reality.

POLAND

Apple Blossom (18 minutes). A pastoral film showing life in the country at the coming of spring.

The Dragon of Cracow (22 minutes). A delightful puppet film which tells a fairytale about a poor shoemaker, who killed the cruel dragon which was ravaging the country, and married the King's daughter.

The Flood (15 minutes). An exciting film which shows the damage done by floods during the spring of 1947 in Poland, and the slow heart-

breaking work of reconstruction after they had abated.

SPAIN

Arcos de la Frontera (14 minutes). A study of the people of the town of Arcos de la Frontera in Spain and of the country around it.

Balele (7 minutes). A film of great vitality showing the native dances of Spanish Guinea.

Un Dia en Santiago (11 minutes). A picture of the town of Santiago, where the shrine of St James of Compostella is situated.

SWEDEN

A Divided World (9 minutes). This, a new film by Sucksdorff, contrasts the cruelty of wild life in the forest with the peace and beauty of the church on its outskirts. The film is remarkable for the superb photography of the animals.

The Open Road (13 minutes). This, another film by Sucksdorff, gives a picture of life in a gipsy encampment, in the north of Sweden.

The Sacrifice (12 minutes). A remarkable and vivid reconstruction of the rite of human sacrifice as it was practised in Sweden in very early times.

The Train (20 minutes). The story of a journey in Sweden as seen from a train.

UNITED NATIONS

Clearing the Way (33 minutes). The need for building the United Nations Headquarters in New York, how it is being planned, and what it will look like.

First Steps (10 minutes). The treatment and rehabilitation of crippled children.

Searchlight on the Nations (21 minutes). The

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right of nations to an international exchange of information and the need for a pooling of knowledge and experience between countries.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Chinese Shadow Play (11 minutes). This film gives a charming example of one of the oldest entertainments in the world—the Chinese shadow play—and shows how it is worked.

Florida—Wealth or Waste (22 minutes). Behind the beauty spots of Florida the land is going to waste. The film surveys the rich natural resources of Florida, which are slowly being eaten away, and makes a strong plea for a firm policy of conservation.

Henry Moore (18 minutes). A comprehensive study of the work of Henry Moore as a sculptor and artist.

Louisiana Story (79 minutes). Robert Flaherty's new film is a beautiful and moving story of life in the Louisiana swamp lands. The hero is a small French-Canadian boy, simple and superstitious, but happy with his animals and his games. Then to the swamp come the oil men, and soon a great derrick goes up in the river, and we watch the impact of this monster of civilization on the primitive mind of the boy. Oil is found but the gusher blows and for a time all is chaos. Eventually it is got under control with the assistance of the magic charms of the boy and the science of the engineers, and the derrick departs, leaving the boy and the land as they were before, except that the boy now has a gun of his own.

Strange Victory (68 minutes). Brilliantly edited and with a telling commentary, this film is unfortunately marred by excessive length and repetition. The first part is a compilation of library material which reminds us of what we went through during the war years, and traces the rise of the Nazi party and its race theories. From this it passes to an indictment of the anti-negro and anti-semitic tendencies growing in the United States, and stresses their dangers. *The Quiet One* (70 minutes). This moving film deals with the psychiatric treatment of delinquent children from the slums of New York. For its theme the film reconstructs the life of a small negro boy, poor, backward, starved of love, and hating the home in which he lives alone with his grandmother. Gradually he

drifts aimlessly into crime and is taken to a special school. Here we see how the staff with endless patience slowly coax him back to a more normal attitude to life.

The School that Learned to Eat (22 minutes). This film shows how one of the backward schools in the Southern States of America improved its standard of diet and feeding arrangements by means of co-operation between the children and their parents, resulting in better health and happiness both for the children and the community as a whole.

Two Chinese Dances (11 minutes). Two examples of Chinese dancing, demonstrated by a Chinese-American.

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

A Day in the Life of the USSR (75 minutes). This is an omnibus compilation shot by fifty cameramen showing scenes and events in the many different parts of the country on a single day in 1947.

Springtime in the Mountains (11 minutes). A picture of the beautiful scenery in Caucasia.

The Vain Bear (12 minutes). A delightful cartoon about a bear, who, dissatisfied with his appearance, acquired a peacock's tail. The result is a disaster for him, and he is only rescued from hunters by the joint efforts of his friends.

White Gold (11 minutes). An interesting combination of cartoon and actuality to illustrate the uses and importance of cotton in the economy of the USSR.

YUGOSLAVIA

Children's Welfare (11 minutes). This is an instructional film dealing with the care of children in the nursery schools of Yugoslavia.

Slavitz (100 minutes). This is a feature film which tells a story of the fight against Fascism in Yugoslavia during the war. The heroes and heroines are the workers of the village, who rise against their capitalist oppressors. These are assisted first by the Italians and then by the Germans. Eventually the villagers are obliged to take to the hills, where they join the Partisans. After many adventures the war is won under the leadership of Tito, and they return with depleted ranks in triumph to their village.

An Exhibition about Documentary Films?

(Continued from page 99)

asked whether it could be made available for showing. In addition, George Toeplitz of Poland, the secretary of the World Union of Documentary, saw it during a visit here and also wanted a copy for exhibition purposes in his own country. But the exhibition, successful as it was at Edinburgh, has only scratched the surface of the problem. Once again documentary has spoken only to the limited few. But it has proved one thing—that the proposed exhibition about documentary was no unworkable airy-fairy scheme. Part of it has been made to work, and made to work in the span of a few weeks and with practically no money. The need for an exhibition about documentary films for the man and woman in the street is as strong as ever. The knowledge is there; the enthusiasm is there; but where is the money?

LONDON SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETY

THE London Scientific Film Society has now been in existence for ten years and was the first film society of its kind to be formed. Its policy has always been to bring, through the medium of film, the latest developments in the world of science to the members. The word scientific is interpreted in the widest sense and the subject matter of the films has ranged from pure research to social science.

Once again the society has had to change its meeting place, this year the show will be held at the Royal Empire Society on week-day evenings. The eleventh season opens on November 11 when the show will consist mainly of medical films, including the Canadian *Feeling of Hostility* and the new COI film *Polio Diagnosis and Management*.

Inquiries regarding membership should be addressed to the Hon Secretary at 34 Soho Square, London, W1.

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The Critics on the Steps

★ '“WAVERLEY STEPS” does in part for Edinburgh what “RHYTHM OF A CITY”, “BERLIN” and “MENSCHEN AM SONNTAG” did for Stockholm and Berlin, and what no film has done for any other British city....

To convey all this without a commentary by nuance and suggestion to one who, like myself, has never seen the City of Edinburgh is the signal achievement of “WAVERLEY STEPS”—a crisp, rhythmic film with brain and wit behind it....

This half-hour film, of which I shall write again when it is released, has, in fact, found something that should be pursued and developed.'

RICHARD WINNINGTON
News Chronicle, August 23, 1948

★ 'By far the best of the three new films..... is “WAVERLEY STEPS”. Here something very much like genius is displayed by director, cameraman and editor in combination—respectively John Eldridge, Martin Curtis and John Trumper. The Central Office of Information produced it for the Scottish Home Department, and if all official patronage were to be like this there would be no grumbling. For Eldridge has plainly been allowed to reproduce his own impression of Edinburgh—and no nonsense about susceptibilities. Black and white here, misty there, sometimes squalid, often touching and nearly always amusing. It is the Edinburgh of life, not that of the guidebook.'

'CRITIC'S NOTE'
Manchester Guardian, August 31, 1948

*We would like to thank the Central Office of Information
for giving us the opportunity to make this film*

*

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